



The Task Force on Court Facilities  
303 Second Street, South Tower, San Francisco, CA 94107-1366



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**Meeting Report**  
Standards / Facility Evaluation Committee Meeting  
October 7, 1998  
Clarion Inn, Sacramento, CA

<b>TASK FORCE ATTENDEES:</b> Hon. Daniel J. Kremer, TF Chair (1 <sup>st</sup> half)	<b>PRESENTERS:</b> Mr. Dan Smith, Daniel C. Smith & Associates/Vitetta Group
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS:</b> <b>PRESENT:</b> Hon. Wayne Peterson, Chair Sheriff Robert T. Doyle Hon. Michael E. Nail (2 <sup>nd</sup> half) Mr. Eugene A. Spindler II (2 <sup>nd</sup> half)	<b>CONSULTANTS TO THE TASK FORCE:</b> Ms. Kim Steinjann, Daniel, Mann, Johnson, & Mendenhall
<b>ABSENT:</b>  Hon. Martha Escutia Hon. Gary Freeman	<b>GUESTS:</b>  Mr. Joe V. Lopez, Colorado Judicial Department Ms. Sally Krotine, Department of Finance Ms. Jane Morrissey, Administrative Office of the Courts (2 <sup>nd</sup> half)

- I. Judge Peterson opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. (The committee met from approximately 8:30 to 9:45 a.m., and then reconvened at approximately 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. This was to allow the Task Force to meet as a whole for opening remarks.)
- II. Mr. Dan Smith, the consultant team's "Phase 2 – Standards" phase leader, began by presenting the results of Task 2A Data Collection. Mr. Smith contacted all 50 states and the Federal government to determine whether and how court facility standards are used. States were contacted first by telephone with a follow-up written questionnaire. Approximately 80% of the states with standards replied. The standards ranged from very general to specific. Examples are included in the Task Force binder handout entitled *Outline of Phase 2 Tasks to Be Addressed at the October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting*.
- III. By comparison with other states, California's existing 1991 *California Trial Court Facilities Standards* are very general. Note that California's standard covers only new construction and does not include the effects of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or court unification. In the absence of detailed standards, architects and planners use commonly accepted industry standards when designing new projects.
- IV. Mr. Joe Lopez of Colorado said that court consultants were hired to write Colorado's standards.
- V. The Federal court facility standards are guidelines. They are very detailed and specific, and are frequently used as a minimum standard.
- VI. Mr. Smith stated that the administrative procedures for defining, enforcing and implementing standards may be a critical part of the standards process. Justice Kremer said that even with very rigid standards,

the political process will still allow negotiation, and that the Task Force's recommendations should be independent of the implementation process. Justice Kremer believes this is outside the purview of this Task Force. Judge Nail said that who the final decision-maker is will affect the implementation of standards.

- VII.** Judge Peterson suggested that the standards recommendation process begin by defining assumptions about what the court system will likely be in the future. For example, jury assembly size, the effects of unification, the process for challenging a judge. The standard can be written with a footnote stating that if the assumptions change, the standards may not apply. One size does not fit all, so the standards must be flexible. This is true also because technology changes so fast. Judge Peterson favors an optimum standard as opposed to a minimum standard.
- VIII.** Judge Peterson went on to say that the type of calendar (master or independent) used by a court will affect the facilities required. He said that the type of calendar used frequently is a local issue.
- IX.** Several participants said that one size will not fit all; different standards will be required depending on the size of jurisdiction and/or facility.
- X.** Mr. Smith strongly recommended that the committee include renovation as part of the standards because there are so many existing court buildings.
- XI.** There was discussion on what comprises a courthouse. The overall opinion seemed to be that in larger jurisdictions, new facilities will tend to be courts-only to keep court facilities from getting too large. In smaller jurisdictions it probably is not feasible to build stand-alone courts buildings, so other courts-related functions may be housed there: probation, district attorney, public defender. The standards should recognize the difference between courts-only and shared facilities.
- XII.** Standards for security were discussed. Mr. Lopez said that Colorado has a security standard that supplements the court facility standard. Sheriff Doyle is on the board of the State Sheriffs' Association and will distribute its security guidelines. Mr. Smith said that he will distribute the National Association of Sheriffs security standards also. A working group on security will be required, with representation from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), State Sheriffs' Association, judges and court administrators.
- XIII.** Participants noted that the Board of Corrections has jurisdiction over holding areas within court facilities.
- XIV.** A working group on technology will be required. Judge Peterson said that the standards must be flexible in order to accommodate operational changes that may come about as a result of new technology.
- XV.** Justice Kremer said that recommendations on appellate court standards will be part of the study. A working group may be required. Judge Peterson said that possible issues would be whether trial and appellate court facilities could be housed in the same building, and the required separation between the two, both visual and functional.
- XVI.** A working group on unification and operations will be required. Court administrators and attorneys should be encouraged to participate.
- XVII.** Judge Peterson said the Task Force should consider a working group on finishes and durability of materials. He said that the tendency is to buy low and then replace furniture shortly afterward. Mr. Lopez said that the state of Colorado funds furniture and computers for office space, and has standards for these. Mr. Smith suggested that a working group cover all environmental and image issues: lighting, acoustics, ADA.

- XVIII.** The committee agreed that the same standard should apply to official judicial positions and to other personnel acting in a judicial capacity.
- XIX.** Mr. Smith then discussed Task 2B Past Utilization of Standards. Approximately 10 court buildings have been constructed since the 1991 standards were implemented. He suggested detailed follow-up on three facilities:
- 1) Butte County, Oroville, small
  - 2) Riverside County, Indio, medium
  - 3) City and County of San Francisco, large
- XX.** These facilities would be toured in November and Task Force members would be notified in advance if they wanted to attend. The purpose of the visits would be to determine to what degree the standards were used in planning the facilities, and how the standards could be improved. Results would be presented to the Task Force in January. No objections were made to the list of facilities.
- XXI.** Mr. Smith then discussed Task 2C Key Issues. Position papers on key topics will be presented to the committee at the next Task Force meeting, and to the Task Force at the following meeting.
- XXII.** While displaying the Phase 2 schedule Mr. Smith noted that the recommended working standards are needed for the Phase 2 report due July 1, 1999, and also to begin Phase 4 Facility Evaluation.
- XXIII.** Mr. Smith continued with an overview of what is required to complete Phase 2. Task 2D Develop Preliminary Standards Recommendations will be discussed in April, 1999 and feedback will be solicited from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and public works departments.
- XXIV.** Task 2E Test Impact of Standards Recommendations includes review of projects in the planning stages to see how they would be affected by the proposed standards; not all counties will be included, the goal is to get a general idea of whether there will be any large impacts.
- XXV.** The result of Task 2F Standards Recommendations will be the project working standards to be used to evaluate facilities in Phase 4. Feedback is expected from Phase 4 which may modify the standards. This will be raised with the Task Force in Phase 4 and the recommended standards will be changed as necessary before the final report is published.
- XXVI.** Task 2G Prepare Survey Instruments will take the working standards recommendations and apply them to existing court facilities.
- XXVII.** Mr. Dan Smith will distribute work products to the Committee before the next Task Force meeting.
- XXVIII.** Mr. Smith asked if the committee felt it would be appropriate to make some public announcement about whether or not the standards will change dramatically. He said that many counties are holding off required construction while waiting for the new standards recommendations.
- XXIX.** The committee agreed that its meetings will be held in conjunction with Task Force meetings.
- XXX.** The committee would like direction from the Task Force on how to implement the working groups.



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